

# *3rd Annual Knoxville Black Maternal Health Conference*



**April 13, 2025**



*Curated by: Alexis Alsup, Femeika Elliott & Damon Rawls*



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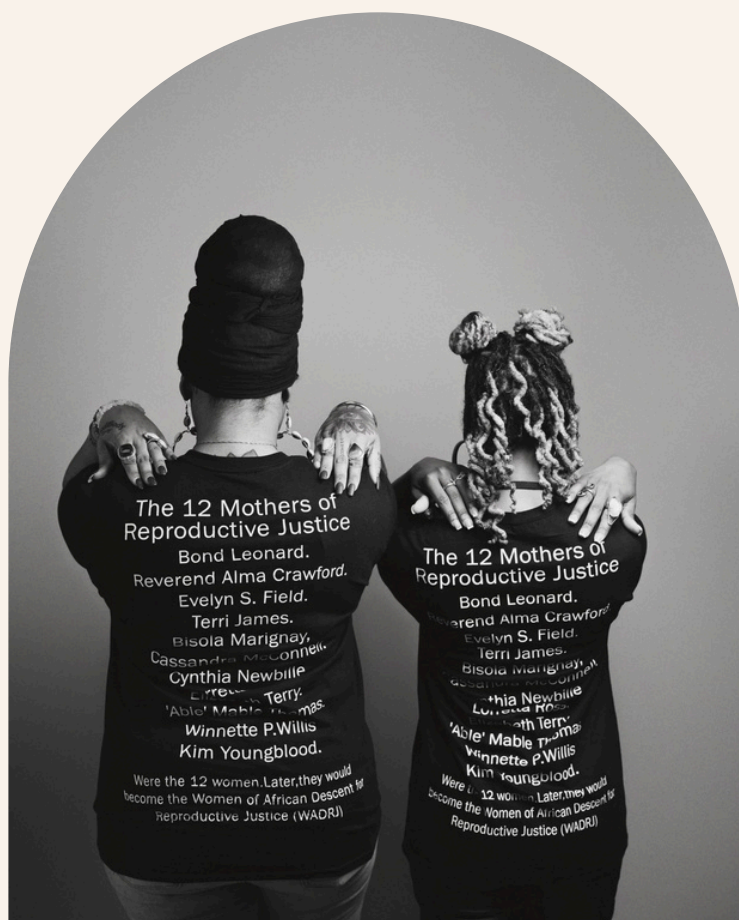
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# ***THE REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE MOVEMENT***

**Definition: “The human right to control our sexuality, our gender, our work, and our reproduction. That right can only be achieved when all women and girls have the complete economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, our families, and our communities in all areas of our lives.”**

In 1994, twelve Black Women gathered and through their collective wisdom and resistance a seed was planted. A direct action on August 9, 1994 - where nearly 800 Black women signed a call out of Congress on healthcare reform birthed the term Reproductive Justice. This direct action shifted the culture and laid the foundation for a new framework that ignited a movement. Ultimately, we are working to secure our human right to make our own decisions about our bodies, our families, and our futures.



# Foreword I

In Tennessee, the situation is especially alarming.

- Maternal mortality rates have doubled from 15.5 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2013 to a distressing 29.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, as the Tennessee Department of Health reported.
- The 2023 MMR Report stated that In 2021, 134 women in Tennessee died while pregnant or within one year of pregnancy. 7 in 10 (70%) pregnancy- associated deaths were deemed preventable. MMRC noted several contributing factors to deaths including substance use disorder (45%), mental health conditions (31%), discrimination (22%) and obesity (21%).
- Women with lower socioeconomic status often face complex health, medical, and mental health needs and are at higher risk for poor pregnancy outcomes. Most pregnancy associated deaths (71%) occurred in women who had TennCare/Medicaid at delivery.
- Almost half (49%) of women who died from pregnancy-related causes had TennCare at delivery. (2022 Maternal Mortality Annual Report, pg. 22) . Tennessee ranks 43rd in the nation for its level of maternal healthcare. This stark statistic underscores a pressing healthcare disparity that heightens the urgency for reform.
- The 2023 MMR Report reflects that over half of the pregnancy related deaths that occurred in Tennessee occurred between 42–365 days postpartum. Adding to the poignancy of this situation is the sobering fact that 84 percent of these maternal deaths are preventable. Let that sink in; 84% of mothers and babies who died in the United States died of something preventable or treatable.

Scan to view the  
2023 TN MMR Report



Scan to listen to our testimony  
on the 2023 MMR Report





# Foreword II

**Black Women are *three times* more likely to experience postpartum depression and mortality than their white counterparts as 20% of postpartum deaths are due to postpartum depression.**

**Medical apartheid and obstetric abuse have existed within black and brown communities for over 100 years and counting as women of color are seldomly advocated for--joining the statistics of maternal mortality.**

**Research shows a wide range of community-based approaches could improve maternal health outcomes and patients' experiences while also potentially reducing costs. Such approaches could especially benefit those most at risk for poor outcomes, particularly people of color and those with low income. One policy option is expanding reimbursement for providers like doulas and midwives, whose care has been associated with improved maternal and infant health outcomes in some research. Other options include enhancing patient access to a broader range of services and incentivizing health systems and providers to adopt evidence-based, equity-centered models of care.**

**Scan to listen TN General  
Assembly Health & Welfare  
Committee Hearing**





## Overview

# Event Background

The Third Annual Black Maternal Health Conference features local researchers, birth workers, holistic practitioners, business owners, health providers, advocates, activists and professionals who work within the realm of maternal health, family studies and wellness in the United States. This year's conference will feature a **'Paternal Health & Fatherhood Track'** for fathers, aspiring fathers, male leaders and youth. This event brings awareness, education, interactive modules and art together in all things black maternal health and wellness for our community addressing the shortcomings of maternal health for women, men & their families. Parents with lived experiences with lived experiences related to the subject matter including fatherhood and male mentorship are highly encouraged to attend.

## Overview

# Event Objectives



## Awareness & Educate

This event brings all things black maternal health for our community addressing the shortcomings of maternal health for black and rural women & their families. We are making a call to to submit abstracts and vendors to engage community.



## Advocate

Leverage recommendations from community birthworkers and families to advocate for change within communities and our state.



## Allocate

Make informed resource allocation decisions to improve the health of mothers, fathers, babies and families by funding community based programs and the perinatal workforce.



## Event Description

# Event Activities

The conference overview includes our keynote, education and awareness presentations, maternal health & wellness vendors, onsite demonstrations, refreshments, support groups; ending with an ode and tribute to mothers.

## Guest Speakers & Workshops

We will bring awareness to the community and stakeholders on the status of the maternal health landscape in Knoxville. Participants will hear from respected keynotes, experts and guest speakers.



## Wellness Pods

Step into serenity with our wellness pods: a sanctuary designed for relaxation, rejuvenation and holistic well-being. Attendees will experience tranquil moments in the midst of conference.

## Vendors & Giveaways

We will provide access to local and regional resources to include but not limited to: women's health providers, alternative healing modalities, regenerative medicine and wombcare.





## Event Description

# Event Activities

### Artivism

By engaging people through art, artivism makes the subject of maternal health more relatable and impactful, fostering greater empathy and driving meaningful conversations about necessary changes in healthcare and support systems.



### Support Groups

Provide a comprehensive support system, in which our support groups aim to address the multifaceted needs of teen girls and women attending the conference--helping them to feel informed, supported, and empowered in their journey towards better maternal health and women's advocacy.

### Hands on Learning & Training

Engage in our hands on learning sessions: diving into interactive, skill-building activities designed to foster practical understanding and real-world application in the maternal health and reproductive justice space ensuring attendees leave with tangible takeaways for professional and personal growth.





**NEW IN 2025**

## **PATERNAL HEALTH TRACK**

### **Artivism**

By engaging people through art, artivism makes the subject of fatherhood more relatable and impactful, fostering greater empathy and driving meaningful conversations about necessary changes in healthcare and support systems.



### **Support Groups**

Provide a comprehensive support system, in which our support groups aim to address the multifaceted needs of male youth and fathers attending the conference--helping them to feel informed, supported, and empowered in their journey towards better maternal health and women's advocacy.

### **Workshops**

Engage in our learning sessions: diving into interactive, skill-building activities designed to foster practical understanding and real-world application in the maternal health and reproductive justice space ensuring attendees leave with tangible takeaways for professional and personal growth as men.





# ***Impact Report***

The conference overview includes our keynote, education and awareness presentations, maternal health & wellness vendors, onsite demonstrations, refreshments, youth support groups; ending with an ode and tribute to mothers.

## **Year 2023 – 1 Day Event**

- 75 attendees
- Diaper distribution-\$500
- Giveaways retailing at \$1,200
- Baby clothing \$200
- Food \$1,500
- 2 expert panels
- 4 wellness pods

## **Year 2024– 2 Day Event**

- 200 attendees
- Diaper distribution \$1,500
- Giveaways retailing at \$2,500
- Baby clothing \$500
- Awarded 2 American Heart Association 'Mommy Kits'
- Food \$3,000
- 5 expert panels
- 16 workshops
- 3 wellness pods
- Championed the passing of maternal health legislation SB1832/HB2226.

# ***2023-2024 Sponsors***

Thank you to our donors and sponsors for the past two years. Your contribution to the annual conference makes a difference!

- Pellissippi State Community College
- Birth Nerds
- University of Tennessee Nutrition
- Three Rivers Market
- The Printing Image
- Central Creamery
- Lauren J. Turner Fine Art
- Vital Village Networks
- Levron's Art Videography
- City of Knoxville
- Aw Snap Photography
- YWCA of Greater Knoxville
- Converge Partners in Access
- Helping Mamas Knoxville
- Planned Parenthood (TN & N MS)
- Community Gardens & Growers Alliance
- Commissioner Dasha Lundy
- Councilwoman Amelia Parker
- United Way of Greater Knoxville
- March of Dimes
- Ebony & Ivory Brewery
- Real Good Kitchen Foundation
- Three Cubed
- Aesthetic Creative Consulting
- American Heart Association
- Indulgence Nails
- Holinity
- Battlefield Farm
- Urz Professional Beauty
- SeaChel Skincare & Oils
- Ready Nest Counseling
- Nourish Knoxville
- Steamboat Sandwiches
- Klosets by Kelsey
- Irth
- TN Center for Reproductive Acupuncture
- Payne Beauty
- The Empirical Herbalist
- Milk & Honey Lactation Services



# Keynote & Guest Speakers

Over the past two years, the Knoxville Black Maternal Health Conference has provided community with a diversity of keynote speakers and surprise guests as experts in the maternal healthcare sector and perinatal workforce. Past speakers include: Jazzmine Curtis, Jeanette Toney, M.D., Stephanie Mitchell, DNP., CNM., CPM., Camille Bennett, Juan Irby, Omari Maynard, Renee Boynton-Jarrett, Senator Becky Massey & Senator Lamar London.

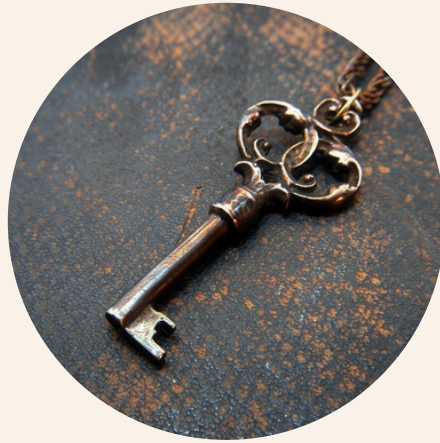
## 2023



## 2024







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## ACCESS TIER \$5,000

### *PRESENTING SPONSOR*

- Opportunity to Welcome Guests at opening
- Recognition on registration page
- VIP Seating during Spark Chats & Learning Sessions
- Recognition on event programs
- Post featuring all Supporting Sponsors on KBMH Symposium social platforms
- Featured full post about company on all social media platforms

- Recognition on event programs
- Recognition in remarks throughout the Black Maternal Health Symposium program
- Emcee Recognition of Company Sponsor during event



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## ***JUSTICE TIER \$2,000***

- Recognition on event programs
- Recognition in opening remarks of Black Maternal Health Symposium program

- Post featuring all Supporting Sponsors on KBMH Symposium social platforms
- Emcee Recognition of Company Sponsor during event



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## ***ADVOCACY TIER \$1,000***

- Recognition on event programs
- Recognition in opening remarks of Black Maternal Health Symposium program
- Post featuring all Supporting Sponsors on KBMH Symposium social platforms





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## ***BIRTHRIGHT TIER \$500***

- Recognition on event programs
- Post featuring all Supporting Sponsors on KBMH Symposium social platforms

***We have also have in-kind sponsorship opportunities for every business and organization to include Swag Bags, Catering and Marketing Materials.***



## Overview

# Speaker Breakdown

Speaker	Packages
<b>Tatyana Ali, Actor &amp; Founder of Baby Yams</b> <b>Keynote</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaking Fee</li><li>• Honorarium</li><li>• Travel Expenses</li><li>• Accommodations</li><li>• Meals</li></ul>
<b>Elaine Welteroth, TV host, Wash Pro Columnist &amp; Founder of the BirthFund</b> <b>Keynote</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaking Fee</li><li>• Honorarium</li><li>• Travel Expenses</li><li>• Accommodations</li><li>• Meals</li></ul>
<b>Dr. Ndidiamaka A., Professor Black Maternal Health Tufts University School of Medicine</b> <b>Keynote</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaking Fee</li><li>• Honorarium</li><li>• Travel Expenses</li><li>• Accommodations</li><li>• Meals</li></ul>

## ***Package Details***

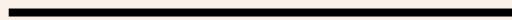
***Speaking Fee: \$10,000 – \$20,000***

***Honorariums: \$4,000***

***Travel: \$10,000***

***Rideshare Stipends: \$1000***

***Hotel Accommodations: \$6000***



## ***Miscellaneous:***

### **Catering**

Real Good Kitchen \$3000

The Creamery \$4000

**Meet The Speaker**

# *About Tatyana Ali*



**Tatyana Ali, Founder**

**Wife, Mama, 5-time NAACP Image Award winner, singer, writer, producer, activist, & Harvard graduate, Designer/ Business Owner of Baby Yams**

For four decades, actress, singer, and producer Tatyana Ali has is a multigenerational talent, her acting credits include “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air”.

Now Ali is using her voice to advocate for maternal health with the launch of her new company, “Baby Yams,” a limited-edition series of handmade, heirloom-quality baby quilts. After enduring a harrowing ordeal during the birth of her first son, Ali tells the L.A. Sentinel that she opted to work with a midwife for her second child, “because I wanted a completely different experience.”

[Tatyanaaliv.com](http://Tatyanaaliv.com)

**Baby Yams** TM



**Meet The Speaker**

# About Elaine Welteroth



**Elaine Welteroth, TV host, Wash Pro Columnist & Founder of the Birth Fund**

Elaine Welteroth is an American journalist and editor. In 2017, Welteroth was named editor-in-chief of Teen Vogue, making her the second African-American in Condé Nast's 107-year history to hold such a title. Her promotion to editor at age 29 makes her the youngest in Condé Nast history to become editor. Her break in the media world came as an intern at Ebony magazine, where she moved up the ranks to become beauty editor between 2008 and 2011. After a stint at Glamour magazine, Welteroth joined Teen Vogue in 2012. When she became beauty director of Teen Vogue in 2012, Welteroth was the first African-American to serve in the role.

She is credited for the notable increase of Teen Vogue coverage of politics and social justice, encouraging readers to become civically engaged, specifically during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Under Welteroth's leadership of Teen Vogue's shifting format, the magazine developed its first YouTube channel, featuring content on diverse subjects from campus style to cultural appropriation. According to Condé Nast, subscriptions for Teen Vogue have increased 535% year-over-year. In 2016, Welteroth was named 47th in The Root's list of 100 influential African-Americans.

The Birth Fund

**BIRTHFUND**

## Meet The Speaker

# About Dr. Amutah-Onukagha



**Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

**Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Professor of Black Maternal Health and  
Associate Professor in Public Health and Community Medicine**

Dr. Amutah-Onukagha is the Julia A. Okoro Professor of Black Maternal Health in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. Her current research interests include maternal health disparities, reproductive health and social justice, infant mortality, and HIV/AIDS in Black women. Dr. Amutah-Onukagha also serves as the inaugural Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Public Health and Professional Degree Programs. In 2022 Dr. Amutah-Onukagha founded the Center for Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice (CBMHRJ) at Tufts University School of Medicine and is one of the first centers dedicated nationwide to addressing maternal health inequities.

A well-published author, Dr. Amutah-Onukagha has over 70 manuscripts, 6 book chapters, a best-selling book on Amazon, and a textbook on culturally responsive evaluation. Her research has also been featured across a series of platforms, including, The Lancet, TedX, USA Today, and MSNBC. She also serves on the editorial board for the Journal of Women's Health Issues. She lives in MA with her husband and two sons.

Mother Lab



School of Medicine  
Center for Black Maternal  
Health & Reproductive Justice

## Meet The Speaker

# About Joel Austin



**Joel Austin, President/ CEO of Daddy University**

Mr. Austin serves as a strong, undeniable force in propelling positive parenting education to the forefront of the family and community agenda. Fueled by his role as a father of four, Mr. Austin is personally and professionally committed to educating and re-educating fathers about the importance of positive parenting. Through his leadership, Daddy University Inc. has grown into a recognized authority on fatherhood information, support, and training. As a national speaker and skilled facilitator, Mr. Austin has presented to thousands across the nation; infusing his passion through audiences and empowering individuals and groups to positively impact the lives of others. Mr. Austin is a proud graduate of Cheyney University of Pennsylvania and obtained real-life skills training as a veteran of the U.S. Army. He measures his success by each parent he inspires and attributes his family with keeping him focused. He is recognized by his peers as a trailblazer in the field of fatherhood and appreciated by young and more seasoned fathers for his authentic advice, compassionate wisdom, and contagious passion.

[Daddy University](#)



## Meet The Speaker

# About James Hogue



**James Hogue, Husband and Father, Birth Doula | Childbirth Educator,  
Founder of Fathers Assisting Mothers (FAM)**

James journey began in 2020, amidst the joy and challenges of welcoming his son into the world. He faced unexpected hurdles during childbirth, which underscored the vital role of being an informed advocate for his wife. This personal experience sparked a realization: expectant fathers often lack the knowledge and support needed to actively contribute to positive childbirth outcomes.

James was driven by a passion to fill this gap; he shared his story and connecting with other fathers-to-be. The overwhelming response revealed a common desire among expectant fathers for guidance and support. This led him to go and get trained as a birth doula, then the creation of Fathers Assisting Mothers (FAM), officially launched as a 501(c)(3) organization in November 2022.

**YOU ARE NOT IN THIS ALONE.**

Fathers Assisting Mothers (FAM)





# About Omari Maynard



**Omari “Muz” Maynard, ARIAH Foundation Founder  
Visual Artist, Educator, Reproductive Activist and the life partner of Shamony**

Omari Maynard is an educator by trade and an artist by craft. He has received his bachelor's degree in Marketing from Hampton University, an MBA and a Masters in Sport Business Management from the University of Central Florida, and a Masters degree in Special Education from Long Island University. With these degrees, he has worked for the NBA, for sports marketing companies, not for profit organizations, and the Department of Education.

As a child, he watched his uncle, Leo Carty, a highly accomplished artist, and Fulton Art Fair alumni, create beautiful masterpieces. He dabbled in exploring his artistry at an early age but did not pursue his artistic talents until he graduated from college. In 2016, Omari and his life partner, Shamony Gibson, started their own business. Art-fulliving is a lifestyle and event planning business with an emphasis on artistic expression. Unfortunately, Shamony transitioned in October 2019, due to complications after giving birth to their second child. Her untimely passing has provided Omari with a drive to live his life as creatively and purposefully as possible.

Today he draws his creative inspiration from his family, life experiences, cultural influences, and his environment. His use of color, dimension, and texture exhibits true, raw, and natural talent. The evolution of artistry is evident in his work. His pieces tell stories that are thought provoking, intellectually inspiring, and technically sound.

[The ARIAH Foundation](#)



# About Bruce McIntyre



**Bruce McIntyre**  
**Founder of Save A Rose Foundation**  
**Lifelong Partner, Amber Rose Issac**

Bruce started the saveArose Foundation in Honor of his late spouse/partner Amber Rose Isaac, who fell victim to birth complications stemming from medical negligence on April 20th, 2020. He is now raising his son, Elias, as a single father. Bruce has been vocal about the injustice that happened to Amber and mothers who may also have lost their lives due to medical negligence.

Mr. McIntyre's saveArose Foundation seeks to eliminate the systemic flaws within maternal health care. He works with the Birthing Community, members of Congress, U.S. Senators, state legislators, City Council members to put pressure on healthcare providers to do something about the high incidence of maternal mortality

Mr. McIntyre has joined with Kamala Harris, the Democratic Party's vice-presidential nominee, to raise visibility of the message on Maternal Rights for Black/Brown/ Indigenous women. He is working with a collective to bring the first-ever FreeStanding Midwifery-led Birthing Center to the Bronx, and to bring better birthing options to the community. He has also been working on community engagement programs in NYC and North Carolina to introduce programs to the youth to keep them away from gang violence and drug abuse.

[Save A Rose Foundation](#)



Meet the Creators

# About Us



*Femeika Elliott, Founder*  
**The Lotus Program Experience**

Femeika serves community as a food educator, full-spectrum chef and ancestral medicine practitioner. Black maternal health resides as the inspiration of her program.

Whether it be fertility, pregnancy, postpartum or loss—her primary goals are to provide meal support, education and sacred practice; nourishing the woman so that she may focus on this new stage of life.



LOTUS  
PROGRAM

[www.thelotusprogramexperience.org](http://www.thelotusprogramexperience.org)





**Meet the Creators**

# About Us



***Alexis Alsup, Founder***  
**Empowered Doula Services**

Alexis serves the community as holistic birth doula who advocates, educate and support expecting families during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. She is an placenta specialist and student midwife who has a passion to change the care families receive in healthcare. Her mission is to substantially reduce the African American Maternal & Infant mortality rates by bringing awareness to our community on alternative care, as optimal care and informed decision making is essential.



[www.empowereddoula.services](http://www.empowereddoula.services)





# Closing Remarks

Maternal health is a necessity that every woman should be afforded without question. Black maternal health and advocacy is in a crisis as we declare this as a state of emergency.

The disparities within black maternal and infant mortality are at an all-time high as some medical providers lack the extra care and advocacy these women need. In addition, funding remains obsolete for local initiatives to combat this ongoing issue.

These happenings and diagnoses are preventable and can be mitigated. Medical apartheid has existed within this demographic for over 100 years and counting as black women are seldomly advocated for--joining the statistics of maternal mortality.

The Lotus Program Experience and Empowered Doula services are committed to fighting this fight on behalf of women- especially the women whose voices historically tend to be silenced within the medical industry.

Our hope is that you, as a prospective sponsor not only acknowledges the need to continue to do this work, but this state of emergency as well. We appreciate your time reading this proposal in its entirety.



**Closing**

# ***Call to Action***

We would greatly appreciate your investment in community as we are committed to serving our community not only impacting the city of Knoxville, but the State of Tennessee. We aspire to elevate the collective placing an emphasis on mothers, fathers and the maternal health space as we continue to advocate for change.

## **Contact Us**



865-275-6427 | 865-257-9812



knoxvilleblackmaternalhealth@gmail.com



[www.thelotusprogramexperience.org](http://www.thelotusprogramexperience.org)



[www.empowereddoula.services](http://www.empowereddoula.services)

## **Mail Donations to:**



Community Shares Tennessee

1209 Euclid Ave., Suite 201

Knoxville, TN 37921



We are a community entity that is fiscally sponsored by a 501c3 via Community Shares of Tennessee. Checks and Donations are accepted below. Please place “Knoxville Black Maternal Health” in the memo of your donation.

